



Teaching Communication Activism: Communication Education for Social Justice. Edited by Lawrence R. Frey & David L. Palmer. New York, NY: Hampton Press, 2014, 539 pp. ISBN: 9781612891354.

In *Teaching Communication Activism: Communication Education for Social Justice*, Frey, Palmer, and the volume's contributing authors work together to introduce and illustrate communication activism pedagogy (CAP) in theory and application. CAP, as Frey and Palmer (2014) describe, "teaches students studying communication how to use their communication knowledge and capabilities to promote social justice" and this volume provides "exemplars of how communication educators have accomplished that goal in practice" (p. 2). Organized around four categories, the chapters cover theoretical explorations of CAP, CAP courses, social justice activism service-learning, and CAP as extended to other populations and sites beyond the traditional college classroom.

The book begins with a foreword by Peter McLaren, one of the leading scholars in critical pedagogy and, more broadly, social justice education (e.g., see McLaren, 1998; McLaren & Kincheloe, 2007). McLaren ends his foreword by noting that CAP illustrates how critical pedagogy involves all disciplines. Indeed, this co-edited text demonstrates critical pedagogy in communication teaching and learning, but it also pushes critical pedagogy in an important way. CAP urges educators to move beyond raising students' awareness about injustice and toward teaching them how to intervene and take action.

The first three chapters weave the underpinnings of CAP and support a critical reading of the text's subsequent articles. Providing historical, theoretical, philosophical, and ethical considerations, these chapters frame CAP as a pedagogical commitment to cultivating students' communication skills through facilitated learning that explores, questions, and intervenes in local and global contexts to promote social justice. CAP disrupts dominant discourses and common practices in communication education that prepare students to be market ready for the corporate world by teaching students to use communication theories, methods, and practices to intervene in unjust situations and work toward social change.

Frey and Palmer's contributors discuss issues such as gender and violence (Chapter 6), activist performance (Chapters 7, 14, 15), and environmental advocacy (Chapter 8). To tackle these and other important issues, the authors work with diverse communities, ranging from migrant workers (Chapter 10), to middle and high school students (Chapters 11, 13), prisoners (Chapter 14), and indigenous communities in Guatemala (Chapter 15). These descriptions are not exhaustive. All authors employ simple yet powerful prose. Many chapters include quotations from students and community partners to illustrate each teaching example. The chapters on CAP courses provide sample syllabi, including reading lists and evaluation procedures. Each contributor provides insight on course design and inspiration, and openly discusses challenges and ways to improve such teaching. The work is accessible not only in terms of its con-

tent but also in its organization, as Frey and Palmer worked closely with contributors to ensure some basic uniformity in chapter structure (e.g., a section on lessons learned about CAP). Overall, a consistent and coherent message is reinforced with each chapter: communication courses are important, ideal opportunities to support students in developing and using their communication skills to intervene into unjust discourses and to champion social justice.

Even if the chapters are read in isolation, this volume supplies numerous teaching examples, but when read as a whole, it illustrates a spectrum in understanding and integrating social justice activism into communication education. The chapters work together to illustrate connections and commonalities across this type of teaching, but also key differences. Reading the text in its entirety enables readers to gain a holistic and nuanced introduction to the diversity of pedagogical projects and approaches for engaging in CAP. Some chapters illustrate a deep pedagogical reflection; others are more operational in their descriptions of this teaching. This difference may be interpreted as an inconsistency; however, arguably, it reflects the ongoing process and development of each educator's thinking and writing about his or her teaching.

It is important to recognize that this text is part of a larger ongoing conversation about social justice activism in communication scholarship. Frey's earlier co-edited texts with Carragee (2007a, 2007b, 2012) sought to create an inclusive and critical community of communication researchers committed to social justice, and this text does the same thing for communication educators. Frey and his colleagues, thus, are invested in promoting social justice activism in communication research, teaching, and service. Frey, Carragee, and other colleagues have been discussing ideas central to communication activism for social justice scholarship since 1996 (for instance, Frey, Pearce, Pollock, Artz & Murphy 1996; Swartz, 2006). In 1996, Frey and colleagues indicated the need to employ an "explicit label" for communication scholars to describe their scholarship as it relates to social justice (p. 113); CAP is that label for action-oriented communication teaching for social justice. Frey and colleagues did not want the conversation about social justice and communication scholarship to be solely conceptual. They emphasized producing empirical examples of what communication scholarship for social justice might look like (Frey et al., 1996), and this co-edited text on teaching that perspective provides real-life empirical examples of classroom and community practices.

Rather than arguing that all scholars should become CAP practitioners, Frey and Palmer want to create space for such teaching, and in turn cultivate a community for these practitioners to share and discuss their pedagogy. Untold in this particular text is the story of the long-time commitment to this work, including challenges in promoting social justice in communication scholarship (see Artz, 2006; Frey, 2000, 2006; Frey et al., 1996; Pearce, 2006; Pollock, Artz, Frey, Pearce & Murphy, 1996). Many of the chapter contributors, however, describe various challenges that they faced at the classroom and community levels when engaging in activist teaching. Overall, the authors emphasize and illustrate the advantages of this pedagogical approach. Potential barriers, including possible backlash from administrators and educational systems, are discussed, but Frey, Palmer, and the contributing authors focus on what can be accomplished rather than letting the challenges stand in their way.

With this text, Frey and Palmer illustrate the power in merging one's communication scholarship and activist work with teaching. The authors demonstrate a shared commitment to activism with, in, through, and beyond their classrooms. In writing about teaching, these teacher-scholars uncover the potential for studying and discussing the fusion of communication education and research for social justice. This volume empowers communication scholars, both researchers and teachers—and, more broadly, teachers of any topic—to view communicative practices in their classes through the lens of social justice activism, to show how course syllabi, engagement with oppressed community members, classroom dialogue, student reflections and other assignments develop critically aware students who have the capacities and competencies to understand injustice and to intervene to advance needed change.

Overall, the text assists readers in finding an entry point to learning about and considering how communication activism manifests in teaching and learning. Some authors provide deep insights about pedagogical and philosophical rationales, challenges with these approaches, and strategies for success for this type of teaching. This self-reflexivity appears to be a desired goal for the emerging community of CAP educators. This text serves as the first articulation of CAP; in due time, scholars and educators will hone CAP's theoretical, methodological, and practical possibilities. As an emerging scholar in communication, trained teacher, and critical pedagogue, I found this text incredibly exciting as an indication that within the communication discipline, there is a space, label, and community of scholar-activists interested in, talking about, and engaging in communication education for social justice.

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